

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A computerized method of representing at least one characteristic of a design element on a visual design surface, the method comprising:

- (a) representing an element with a shape on a visual design surface;
- (b) determining a value of ~~at least one a~~ characteristic of the element;
- (c) associating the ~~at least one~~ characteristic with an aura indicative of the determined value; and
- (d) displaying the aura in association with the shape on the design surface.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the aura comprises a color coded area surrounding the shape.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the aura comprises a color coded area adjacent to at least a portion of the shape.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

- (e) repeating (a)-(d) for a plurality of elements; and
- (f) merging auras associated with at least some elements in close proximity and having the same value of the characteristic.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further including:

- (e) repeating (a)-(d) for a plurality of elements; and
- (f) sorting the elements so that elements having the same value of the characteristic are generally located in the same region.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further including grouping and displaying elements in affinity regions, wherein each affinity region represents elements having the same value of the characteristic.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further including providing a label for at least one affinity region that allows a user to change the value of the characteristic of all of the elements in the at least one affinity region by changing the label.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ characteristic comprises a use for the element.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ characteristic comprises an identification of a namespace.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ characteristic comprises an identification of an application layer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ characteristic comprises an identification of an importance level.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further including:

- (e) determining a value of ~~at least~~ a second characteristic of the element;
- (f) associating the second characteristic with a second aura indicative of the value of the second characteristic; and
- (g) displaying the second aura in association with the shape on the design surface.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further including:

- (h) determining a value of ~~at least~~ a third characteristic of the element;
- (i) associating the third characteristic with a third aura; and
- (j) displaying the third aura in association with the shape on the design surface.

14-18 (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing computer-executable instructions for performing the steps comprising:

- (a) displaying on a visual design surface ~~a multiple~~ design element shapes; and
- (b) displaying on the visual design surface an aura in proximity to each of the design element shape, the auras being displayed with different visual characteristics in order to indicate that the design element shapes have different ~~to represent a values corresponding to of a~~ particular characteristic.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 19, wherein (b) comprises displaying the aura around the design element shape.

21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein different visual characteristics are associated with different potential values of the characteristic, and (d) displays the aura with the visual characteristic associated with the determined value of the characteristic.